

I want to comment on the FDA's new Proposed Rules on Genetically Engineered Foods (GEF). I do not support the ~~voluntary~~ labeling proposal. I want to know what I am eating, in fact, my choice at present is to avoid all GEF. Consumers have a right to know whether our food has been genetically engineered.. For the past several years, without our knowledge, Americans have been fed increasing amounts of food that has been genetically altered. This is appalling.

In Europe, due to consumer outrage, there is now mandatory labeling of products containing GEF. I want the same protection and rights enjoyed by Europeans. Scientists can be found to debate the safety and dangers of GEF. Studies have shown that there can be allergic responses. Toxicity, lowered nutritional value, compromising immune responses and irreversible changes to the environment have been cited as concerns associated with genetically engineered organisms. Certainly it is true that respected experts have convincing arguments for both sides of this issue. With that in mind, isn't it dangerous for a democracy when consumers are kept in the dark and not informed about what is in the foods they purchase? Again, let me reiterate, I have a right to know whether the food I buy contains GEF.

Additionally, I understand that presently GEF are not tested by the FDA for food safety, and genetically engineered organisms don't undergo pre-market testing by the FDA for their environmental impact. This work is left to the companies introducing the products. FDA's proposal for companies to merely voluntarily consult with FDA concerning the safety of their foods and products is totally unacceptable to me. These patented GE products are not identical to their non-GE relatives. This has been the flawed argument used to avoid testing.

Please amend your New Rules and Guidance on Genetically Engineered Foods and require:

1. extensive mandatory pre-market safety testing of GEF.
2. mandatory labeling of all GEF and ingredients.
3. mandatory pre-market ~~environmental~~ review of genetically modified organisms.

Please place a moratorium on any new GEF and organisms until long term studies show the ones currently on the market now are indeed safe for human health and the environment.

I have been an unwitting guinea pig for far too long. The current proposal of New Rules and Guidance on Genetically Engineered Foods is totally unacceptable to me. Please take my comments into consideration and revise your New Rules.

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Sincerely,
David Laughlin

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